Dear Parents,

We proudly present to you our school leaders for 2016. Last Thursday’s assembly was devoted to our Leadership Ceremony, when our school leaders were officially introduced to our school community. As part of the ceremony, the children were presented with their jackets and badges which are an outward symbol of their leadership. In accepting their role of leadership, they have also pledged to accept the responsibilities and duties associated with it, to uphold the good name of St Mary's, and to strive to demonstrate our motto of, Love Above All, in all they do. Our School and House Captains were also presented. These titled leadership positions are all about service, and during the year of 2016 the captains will work in their special roles for the good of our whole school. Congratulations to the following captains: School Captains, Kayla Z and Connor S; Clegg House Captains, Kari P and Blake W; Valinda House Captains, Amelie K and Lachlan R; MacKillop House Captains, Ali H and Tom B, and Melba House Captains, Lily C and Lachlan H. We congratulate our captains and all our Year 6 leaders, and commend each of them on their willingness to take on their leadership responsibilities.

We say a very sad farewell to Keira (5/6L) and Evie (PR) T and their family as they are moving to Adelaide. We thank the family for their contribution to St Mary’s and send them on their way with our love, best wishes and prayers for their new venture.

Last week also saw the beginning of Lent on Ash Wednesday. As a school we attended Mass and had the sign of the cross made on our foreheads as a symbol of our intention to try a little harder to follow the example of Jesus, in these next forty days. On Shrove Tuesday many of our classes prepared for the Lenten season by making pancakes (and eating them too)! 

Congratulations to our Students of the Week:

PB: Joshua McC  
1/2P: James B  
1/2F: Amelie L  
3/4N: Chloe McC  
5/6L: Brooke L

PR: Lily S  
1/2R: Donna D  
3/4R: Mitchell R  
3/4F: Sienna O’T  
5/6F: NA

1/2H: Alizah J  
3/4C: Cohen S  
5/6B: Lily O’B  
5/6S: Lily H-S

With my prayers and best wishes for the coming week,
Mrs Lynne O’Meara
Principal
A Lenten Prayer

Lord, I’m not always eager to do your will. I’d often much rather do my own will. Please be with me on this Lenten journey and help me to remember that your own spirit can guide me in the right direction. I want to “fix” my weaknesses but the task seems overwhelming. But I know that with your help, anything can be done.

With a grateful heart, I acknowledge your love and know that without you I can do nothing.

What’s Coming Up?

Week Four

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday, 15th February</th>
<th>8.45am</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, 17th February</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday 19th February</td>
<td>2.00pm</td>
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- School Assembly
- P & F AGM
- Staff Meeting
- Prep Rest Day
- School Assembly – Please note the new time for assemblies. Parents are most welcome!

Week Five

| Monday, 22nd February |
|-----------------------|--------|
| Wed, 25th February |
| Thursday, 25th February |
| Friday, 26th February |
| 8.45am |
| 3.30pm |

- School Assembly
- Staff Meeting
- District Swimming
- Prep Rest Day
- SCHOOL CLOSURE-Review
- SCHOOL CLOSURE-Review

What’s Coming Up?

- Monday, 15th February – P & F AGM
- Thursday 25th and Friday 26th February – School Closure Day
- 2nd – 4th March – Year 6 Camp & Year 5 Bike Ed
- 8th March – School Photos
- 16th March – First Reconciliation
- 22nd March – House Sports Day
- 23rd March – Parent Teacher Interviews
- Thursday, 24th March 2.30pm – End Term 1
- School Closure Days for 2016
- Thursday 25th and Friday 26th February – School Improvement Review
- Monday 14th March – Labour Day
- Thursday 5th & Friday 6th May – Staff Professional Development
- Monday, 13th June – Queen’s Birthday
- Monday, 30th October (Day before Cup Day) – Reporting

Don’t FORGET!
Do you find that your child is having emotional or behavioral issues or is overly anxious?

OnPsych are a team of fully qualified and registered psychologists who specialise in child and adolescent services working in primary and secondary schools in both individual and group settings.

Services are performed on site at school, at NO COST to the school, student or parent, through Medicare bulk billing.

These services are also available to parents.

We now have an OnPsych psychologist, Arabella Mayne, working here at our school. The approaches that Arabella use include:

- CBT (cognitive behaviour therapy)
- Client centred and solution focussed therapy.
- Employs a collaborative approach.

Issues covered by a mental health plan include: Anxiety, Attention deficit, Alcohol/drug abuse, Adjustment disorders, Bereavement, Conduct disorder, Depression, Eating disorders, Enuresis (non-organic), Neurasthenia, Obsessive compulsive disorder, Panic, Phobia, Psychosis, Post-traumatic, Stress, Sleep disorders, Mood disorders, Spectrum disorders, Interpersonal, learning or behavioural disorders, exam stress, harming and adjustment difficulties (social and situational)

If you believe that this service may benefit your child or yourselves, please contact Lynne O'Meara or Angela Glennie on 9736 2219 for further information on how to access Arabella's services.

**2016 FEES**

**HAVE BEEN BILLED AND SENT HOME**

Please contact the office if you did not get your fee statement for 2016.

School fees include course and subject levies, and the costs of all curriculum excursions and activities. School Fee Statements will be issued at the commencement of the school year on 3rd February 2016 with payment schedules and forms for direct debits. Reminder Statements will be issued at the beginning of each term for your information.

Fee agreements and payment plans have been sent home and are due back immediately!

**St Mary’s BSB/ACCOUNT Details**

St Marys Primary School
BSB 083-347
Account Number 676054930

**(CSEF) CAMPS, SPORTS & EXCURSIONS FUND (CSEF)**

**FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE INFORMATION FOR PARENTS WITH A HEALTHCARE CARD**

Every Victorian child should have access to the world of learning opportunities that exist beyond the classroom. The Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund helps ensure that no student will miss out on the opportunity to join their classmates for important, educational and fun activities. It is part of making Victoria the Education State and the Government’s commitment to breaking the link between a student’s background and their outcomes.

**IF YOU HAVE A CURRENT HEALTHCARE CARD**

Contact the school office to obtain a CSEF application form or download from www.education.vic.gov.au/csef
Sunday, 14 Feb 2016: First Sunday of Lent - Year C

Lk 4:1-13

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus was led by the Spirit through the wilderness where he was tempted.

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit through the wilderness, being tempted there by the devil for forty days. During that time he ate nothing and at the end he was hungry. Then the devil said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to turn into a loaf.’ But Jesus replied, ‘Scripture says: Man does not live on bread alone.’

Then leading him to a height, the devil showed him in a moment of time all the kingdoms of the world and said to him, ‘I will give you all this power and the glory of these kingdoms, for it has been committed to me and I give it to anyone I choose. Worship me, then, and it shall all be yours.’ But Jesus answered him, ‘Scripture says: You must worship the Lord your God, and serve him alone.’

Then he led him to Jerusalem and made him stand on the parapet of the Temple. ‘If you are the Son of God’, he said to him ‘throw yourself down from here, for scripture says: He will put his angels in charge of you to guard you, and again: They will hold you up on their hands in case you hurt your foot against a stone.’

But Jesus answered him, ‘It has been said: You must not put the Lord your God to the test.’

Having exhausted all these ways of tempting him, the devil left him, to return at the appointed time.

The Gospel of the Lord

Other news in Religious Education:

- Don’t forget to return enrolment forms for the sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Communion or Confirmation. These need to be returned to school by this Thursday, February 18th.

- **Commitment Masses for children enrolled in a sacrament**
  This weekend, 20th and 21st February, all children enrolled in a sacrament need to attend one of the parish Masses. Times are 5.00pm Saturday, 10.30 am Sunday and 5.00pm Sunday.

- We are now in the Season of Lent.

- The St. Mary’s Mini Vinnies group met last Thursday for the first time in 2016. Mini Vinnies groups are social justice action groups which strive to help students make the connection between faith, values and action. Through small yet effective initiatives organised at school, students learn about the need in their community and have the opportunity to do something about it. Our first initiative is to increase awareness and organise a fundraising event for Caritas Australia.
**CREATIVE GARDENING**

Calling all garden lovers! As you may know we have a thriving art and craft club (the Community Craft Club) that is run by a group of parent volunteers, and we were wondering if you would help us start a Creative Gardening Club? This could include doing activities such as growing plants in decorated pots, looking after our school veggie patch, helping kids learn to grow and care for plants and many other things. We are seeking interest from Mums, Dads, Grandparents, Aunties, Uncles anybody to come and help us with this.

If you have any ideas or are interested please contact Mrs Glennie, via the school office or email aglennie@smmountevelyn.catholic.edu.au

Thanks from the SAT team (Student Action Team)
Uniforms

All St. Mary’s students are required to wear the full correct school uniform. We believe that the wearing of uniforms promotes the children’s pride in their school and self-discipline. Uniform items can be purchased or made at little cost. The uniform shop at St. Mary’s carries all uniform items, including school and library bags. There is a small amount of second hand uniforms available in the shop.

**Children are expected to have a school bag with the St Mary’s School logo.**

Please ensure that your children bring their correct school bag.

**Girls’ Summer Uniform**
- St Mary’s uniform school dress
- *Length of dresses and tunics should not be above the knee*
- St Mary’s windcheater
- Navy socks
- Black polished shoes (no sneakers/runners)
- School hat

**Boys’ Summer Uniform**
- Navy Shorts
- (no jeans, jean style or cargo pants)
- St Mary’s polo shirt
- St Mary’s windcheater
- Navy socks
- Black polished shoes (no sneakers/runners)
- School hat

**Girls’ Summer Sports Uniform**
- Navy track suit pants
- St Mary’s windcheater
- Navy unisex sports shorts or navy skort
- St Mary’s polo shirt
- White St. Mary’s sports socks or plain white socks and runners
- School hat

**Boys’ Summer Sports Uniform**
- Navy track suit pants
- St Mary’s windcheater
- Navy unisex sports shorts
- St Mary’s polo shirt
- White St. Mary’s sports socks or plain white socks and runners
- School hat

**St Mary’s uniform school dress**

**NEW**
**SPORTS POLO TOPS AVAILABLE**
**$26.00**

**Please ensure that all items of uniform are well maintained, including sports uniform and hats.**

**St Mary’s School logo school bag**
- No jewellery – plain studs, sleepers, watches excepted.
- No make-up
- No extremes of hairstyles
- Long hair to be tied back at all times with navy ties and ribbons
- No nail polish

**An important note on Uniforms.** Whilst it is not compulsory to purchase uniform items only from our uniform shop, we trust that parents will only purchase items that are of the same as sold in the shop. We would ask that you continue to support us as we strive to ensure a disciplined atmosphere in our school, by ensuring that your children do wear the standardised uniform.

Your children may, at times, tell you that it is okay because, “others do it” or “have it”, but this is a good signal that it is NOT okay!

**A note about hair.** As we are a primary school, we feel that any change of colour is inappropriate for children. In the spirit of our practice at St Mary’s, to keep children as children, we ask that you cooperate with this and leave the hair colouring as something that they can look forward to in their older age. We also differentiate between “weekend hair” and “school hair”. The use of hair gel, etc., and styling, is considered to be a “weekend hair” practice. There is also the problem of styling hair so that it will fall over the child’s eyes or face when they lean forward, e.g., long fringes or strands being left out of ties. This then becomes a distraction when they are writing or reading. If we can all work together on this then not only does it assist in their learning and give a more disciplined and uniformed approach, but it will also save you time and money!
Every Victorian child should have access to the world of learning opportunities that exist beyond the classroom. The Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund helps ensure that no student will miss out on the opportunity to join their classmates for important, educational and fun activities. It is part of making Victoria the Education State and the Government’s commitment to breaking the link between a student’s background and their outcomes. Contact the school office to obtain a CSEF application form or download from www.education.vic.gov.au/csef

SCHOOL TERM DATES 2016

Term 1
Preps Only
Friday, 29th January – Thursday, 24th March

All other Students
Thursday 28th January – Thursday, 24th March
‘Easter 25th – 28th March

Term 2
Monday, 11th April – Friday, 24th June

Term 3
Monday, 11th July – Friday, 16th September

Term 4
Monday, 3rd October – Friday, 16th December

Uniform Shop Assistants
Volunteers required for Uniform Shop on Thursday mornings 8.30 – 9.00am and Tuesday afternoons 3.00pm - 3.30pm
If you can assist, please leave your name at the office.

Start the New Year Full of Confidence
Children’s Karate
9736-2919
Try Two Weeks FREE!

MT. EVELYN NETBALL CLUB INC
A0003805M
Winter Season 2016
Registrations
Registrations this Tuesday 9th February from 4.00-5.00pm under 9’s & 11’s and 5.00-5.45pm for U13’s at the Netball clubrooms, Morrison Reserve, Mt Evelyn. Enquiries please call Sheelagh 9736 1132
Winter Season commences 5th March 2016
School Procedures for the Bushfire Season

Fire danger ratings and warnings are used in Victoria to provide clear direction on the safest options for preserving life.

Schools and children’s services listed on the DET Bushfire At-Risk Register (BARR) will be closed when a Code Red fire danger rating day is determined in their Bureau of Meteorology district. Our school has been identified as being one of those at high bushfire risk and is listed on the BARR.

Where possible, we will provide parents with up to four days notice of a potential Code Red day closure by letter and SMS message. A Code Red day will be determined by the Emergency Management Commissioner no later than 1.00 pm the day before the potential closure. Once we are advised of the confirmation of the Code Red day we will provide you with advice before the end of the school day.

Once confirmed, the decision to close will not change, regardless of improvements in the weather forecast. This is to avoid confusion and help your family plan alternative care arrangements for your child. It is also important to note that:

- No staff will be on site on days where the school is closed due to a forecast Code Red day.
- School camps will be cancelled if a Code Red fire danger rating day is determined for the Bureau of Meteorology district in which the camp is located.
- All bus routes will be cancelled.

On these Code Red days families are encouraged to enact their Bushfire Survival Plan – on such days children should never be left at home or in the care of older children.

For those of us living in a bushfire prone area, the CFA advise that when Code Red days are forecast, the safest option is to leave the night before or early on the morning of the Code Red day.

As part of preparing our school for potential hazards such as fire, we have updated and completed our Emergency Management Plan.

What can parents do?

- Make sure your family’s bushfire survival plan is up-to-date and includes alternative care arrangements in the event that our school is closed.
- Ensure we have your current contact details, including your mobile phone numbers. Keep in touch with us by reading our newsletters and checking our website.
- Most importantly at this time of year, if you’re planning a holiday or short stay in the bush or in a coastal area, you should check warnings in advance of travel and remain vigilant during your stay.
- If your child is old enough, talk to them about bushfires and your family’s bushfire survival plan.

For up-to-date information on this year’s fire season, visit the CFA website at www.cfa.vic.gov.au or call the 24-hour Victorian Bushfires Information Line on 1800 240 667.

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Mt.Evelyn Primary School OSHC – SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAM

On behalf of Mt.Evelyn Primary School OSHC we would like to invite you to our Vacation Care Program. You can receive your Booking Form for Easter School Holidays from your school office. You may also email, phone or pop in and see Melissa at Mt.Evelyn Primary School. Mt.Evelyn Primary School OSHC is an accredited child care. Families can apply for CCB and CCR rebates. Monday – Friday 6.00am – 2.00pm

osh@mtevenlons.vic.edu.au

28th Mon March Closed Easter Monday
29th Tues March - “Mini Golf” Excursion “Easter Activity Day”
30th Wed March - “Tennis” Incursion
31st Thurs March - “Drawing with different mediums”
1st Fri April - “Ace Space” Excursion “Messy Day”
(2nd Program if Excursion is at capacity)
4th Mon April - “Healesville Sanctuary” Excursion “Use your senses”
(2nd Program if Excursion is at capacity)
5th Tues April - “Letter “C” Day”
6th Wed April - “Wheels Day”
7th Thurs April - “Reading Cinemas” Excursion “Cupcake Day”
(2nd Program if Excursion is at capacity)
8th Fri April - “Multi Media Day” Vacation Care Daily

It is a great opportunity for our local school community to support a wonderful program. Kind regards, Melissa Mc Donald
WORKING BEES 2016

We believe that having a safe and pleasant school environment is important. Thank you to all families who have helped with school maintenance during last year.

To assist planning for this year we are asking each family to attend ONE Working Bee and to indicate which session (listed below) suits best.

In an effort to cater for everyone, we will hold Working Bees across a range of days and times.

The alternative to attending a Working Bee is to complete the payment details below which are for a $60.00 contribution toward hiring maintenance help as required.

Please complete and return the form below as soon as possible (families who have not replied by Feb 26th will be contacted).

Yours faithfully,

THE MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE.
EDUCATION BOARD.

________________________
<br>PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN TO SCHOOL BEFORE MONDAY FEBRUARY 26TH 2016
<br>
<br>NAME: __________________________________________ ELDEST CHILD’S GRADE: _____________.

Monday Feb 29th
(8:45-10:45am)  ☐  Saturday March 19th
(9:00-11:30 am)  ☐

Saturday April 30th
(9:00-11:30 am)  ☐  Wednesday June 8th
(1:10-3:15pm)  ☐

Monday July 25th
(8:45-10:45 am)  ☐  Saturday August 20 (Production set up)
(9:00-11:30am)  ☐

Wednesday Oct 12th
(Twilight 3.30pm-6.00pm)  ☐  Monday Nov 28th
(8:45-10:45am)  ☐

Please debit my credit card for $60.00:

Name on the card __________________________________________  (Please circle) Visa / Mastercard

Credit Card Number: [  ][  ][  ][  ] [  ][  ][  ][  ] [  ][  ][  ][  ] [  ][  ][  ][  ] [  ][  ][  ][  ]

Expiry Date: [  ][  ][  ][  ]
Religious Education News

Sunday, 7 Feb 2016: Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year C

Gospel
Lk 5:1-11

An abundance of fish are caught by Simon.

Jesus was standing one day by the lake of Gennesaret, with the crowd pressing round him listening to the word of God, when he caught sight of two boats close to the bank. The fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats – it was Simon’s – and asked him to put out a little from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat.

When he had finished speaking he said to Simon, ‘Put out into deep water and pay out your nets for a catch.’ ‘Master,’ Simon replied, ‘we worked hard all night long and caught nothing, but if you say so, I will pay out the nets.’ And when they had done this they netted such a huge number of fish that their nets began to tear, so they signalled to their companions in the other boat to come and help them; when these came, they filled the two boats to sinking point.

When Simon Peter saw this he fell at the knees of Jesus saying, ‘Leave me Lord; I am a sinful man.’ For he and all his companions were completely overcome by the catch they had made; so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were Simon’s partners. But Jesus said to Simon, ‘Do not be afraid; from now on it is men you will catch.’ Then, bringing their boats back to land, they left everything and followed him.

The Gospel of the Lord

What sort of messages or errands have you been sent on?
When you are a messenger, what do you have to do? (e.g listen to instructions, make sure you know where to go, pass on the message clearly, etc.)

Jesus asks the fishermen in the Gospel to be messengers. What do you think he means when he tells them they will bring in people rather than fish?

Jesus calls us to be his messengers. How can we be good messengers?

Use the words in the fish to complete the sentence below:

_____ be ______! From ___ on you will _____ in ______ instead of _____.

Other news in Religious Education:

- Don’t forget to return enrolment forms for the sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Communion or Confirmation. These need to be returned to school by Thursday February 18th.

- This Wednesday 10th February at 9.15am we will celebrate a whole school Mass in the church for Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the Lenten season.

- Commitment Masses for children enrolled in a sacrament
  On the weekend of the 20th and 21st February, all children enrolled in a sacrament need to attend one of the parish Masses. Times are 5.00pm Saturday, 10.30 am Sunday and 5.00pm Sunday.
NOMINATIONS FOR THE INCOMING 2016 COMMITTEE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 15th February @ 2.00pm 2016
ALL WELCOME

Please find the nomination forms in the newsletter and fill in which position you would be interested in helping with. All positions are available. We have listed the positions below for you to consider. Please return your completed form to the office as soon as possible.

President - Vice-president – Treasurer – Banking - Secretary of minutes Tuckshop co-ordinators (4 people) – Tuckshop Rosters - Uniform shop co-ordinator - Uniform shop assistants (4 people) – Special Food Day (3 times a year) - Stalls (2 to 4 people) - Food Bank co-ordinator – Fundraising committees (disco, trivia night, field day chocolate drive etc) - General Committee Member

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HELP Urgently Required
We need to roster 6 people per week to run the St Mary’s tuckshop. We have not received enough volunteers to be able to effectively do this, this year.
If you have not put your form in, please do so ASAP.
If we do not receive more responses, we will not be able to run tuckshop in term 2. If we don’t get the volunteers required we will be unable to offer tuckshop in the future. Please commit by filling out the below form.

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PLEASE COMPLETE 2016 TUCKSHOP ROSTER
The St Mary’s Primary School Canteen operates every Friday between 9.00am – 1.00pm. Volunteers are needed to help run the canteen. If you are able to help, please fill out the attached form and return to school office ASAP.

NAME ______________________ PHONE __________________ EMAIL __________________

ELDEST CHILD AND GRADE __________________________________________________________

Availability (please tick)

☐ WEEKLY ☐ FORTNIGHTLY ☐ MONTHLY

☐ EMERGENCY ☐ CO-ORDINATOR ☐ OTHER ____________________________

Thankyou Parents & Friends Committee
Any child interested in playing After School Basketball in Season 1 (commences early February 2016) will need to fill out the following form and return it to the school office by ASAP.

**CURRENT PLAYERS:** If you are currently playing After School Basketball in Season 2 2016, you will still need to fill out the following form so I can format the new teams. Games start at 4pm and finish at 7pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday or Friday afternoons at Kilsyth or Lilydale Basketball Stadiums.

- **Monday:** Grade 4 - Grade 6 Boys
- **Tuesday:** Grade 3 Boys
- **Thursday:** Grade 3 - Grade 6 Girls
- **Friday:** Grade 2 Boys & Girls

### Name____________________ Age 2016_____ Class 2016_____

Are you currently playing After School Basketball?   Yes   No   (please circle)

Have you played competition basketball before?   Yes   No   (please circle)

Parents Name_________________________________________________________________

Home No_________________________ Mobile_________________________

Email Address_________________________________________________________________

Are you able to help as :    Coach Yes/No      Team Manager Yes/No

NOTE: If you are currently playing After School Basketball and do not want to continue in 2016, could you please return your washed basketball singlet top to the office in a bag, clearly marked with your name and class on it. You will then be eligible for your refund.

**2016 BASKETBALL CO-ORDINATOR REQUIRED**

**FOR ALL QUERIES PLEASE CALL LIZ RHODES**

**ON 0414 761 088**

*St Mary's Basketball Singlet Tops*

Children playing in the after school basketball competition are to wear navy blue shorts (the shorts you wear for PE at school are perfect), runners and the St Mary's Basketball Singlet Top. Tops are $25.00 to hire, however, once your child returns the top back to school they will receive a $20.00 refund. Payment can be made by cash or cheque. Cheques need to be made out to "St Mary's Parents and Friends Committee"

Could all payments for the singlet tops and this form please be given to the office ASAP, in an envelope, clearly marked "Basketball Singlet Top Money". If you still have your top from last season, you **DO NOT** need to pay any more money, just hang onto the one you have and use that again.

**St Mary's Basketball Singlet Tops**

Players name:____________________________________ Year Level:________________________

Class:________________

Mum's name:_________________________ Dad's name:_________________________

Mum's mobile:______________________ Dad's mobile:__________________________

Amount enclosed:_____________________

*If you already have a basketball top, please fill out below.*

Number__________________ Size________________

Office use:

Top number given:_____________________ Amount enclosed:_____________________

Cash Yes/No    Cheque details______________________

Date top given:______________________ Date top returned:______________________

Date refund of $20.00 returned:______________________
Building parent-school partnerships

WORDS Michael Grose

10 confidence-building strategies every parent and teacher should know

Instilling confidence takes more than heaping praise on kids. Here are 10 practical confidence-building strategies for parents and teachers of children and young people.

Children with healthy self-esteem and self-confidence learn more, achieve more and are generally happier than those with low confidence levels. Building children’s and young people’s confidence is complex. It’s more than being a praise robot and heaping positive comments on a child at the first sign of them doing something well. Confidence building requires a number of approaches that impact on how they think, how they feel and what they can do.

Here are ten practical strategies that you can use to build real self-confidence in kids of all ages:

1. Model confident thinking
   Kids soak up the language, thinking and behaviour of those closest to them in their environment. Parents and teachers play a part in modelling confident thinking and behaviour particularly when it comes to tackling new activities. In particular, let kids hear positive self-talk when you tackle something new. They should hear something like, “I’ll have a go at this. If I don’t do so well then I can try again tomorrow.” This is far more effective than “I’m no good at this. I’ll probably stuff it up.”

2. Focus on effort & improvement
   Current thinking shows that people who believe that they can increase their intelligence through effort and challenge actually get smarter and do better in school, work, and life over time. One way to develop a growth mindset is to focus your language on effort and improvement rather than on the results of what they do. By linking success with effort you are teaching them success comes from something other than purely their ability, talents or smarts.

3. Praise strategy
   While effort is key for achievement, it’s not the only thing. Kids need to try new strategies and seek input from others when they’re stuck. They need this repertoire of approaches – not just sheer effort – to learn and improve. It helps too to focus language on better and smarter ways on improving. Comments such as “That was a smart idea to tackle the hardest task while you were fresh!”(strategy) and “You recognised the first few steps were the most important but then after that you were right” are descriptive statements that have significant instructional value for kids.

4. Develop self-help skills from an early age
   A child’s self-esteem comes as a result of his or her successes and accomplishments. The most important competencies to build confidence are basic self-help skills. These form the building blocks upon which other competencies such as organisational skills and many social skills are formed.

5. Give them real responsibility
   From a young age start giving children responsibility for some aspects of their lives. By giving kids responsibility we are sending a powerful message that we think they are capable. Also they are learning the skills necessary to care for themselves.

6. Practise unconditional acceptance
   Your ability to accept children and young people’s best efforts in any area of endeavour, irrespective of the results, will go a long way toward determining their self-esteem and confidence.

more on page 2

Want more ideas to help you raise confident kids and resilient young people? Subscribe to Happy Kids newsletter, my FREE weekly email parenting guide at parentingideas.com.au. You’ll be so glad you did.

parentingideas.com.au

© 2016 Michael Grose
... 10 confidence-building strategies every parent and teacher should know ...

If a child makes their bed to the very best of their ability, resist fixing it, even though it may fall short of your adult standards. Instead remind them next time of how to do it well.

7 Expand their horizons
Some kids are confident and capable at home but are fearful and nervous when it comes to new social situations and unfamiliar environments. Children today have less opportunity than those in the past to negotiate and explore unpredictable situations. Wherever possible look for opportunities to expand children's horizons to include unfamiliar places and unfamiliar locations including catching public transport and walking to friends' places unattended when capable.

8 Recognise improvement
Focus your comments on children's effort and improvement rather than on winning the game or getting top marks. Help kids set realistic goals in line with their capabilities and interests. Learning five new spelling words a week maybe more realistic than 20 words that school may require.

9 Put the training wheels on to support learning
Putting training wheels on a bike is a great way to teach a young child to ride. They keep them upright and mobile while they are getting the knack of balancing. We can use the same principle to support kids learning while they develop independence in many areas of life. For instance, we can accompany anxious kids to birthday parties and stay for a short time so they become comfortable before leaving.

10 Build teaching and training into your day
Teaching and training needs to be part of the every day repertoire of a parent. This means we need to add a little extra time to many of our interactions so we can help children acquire many of the basic skills of living, whether it is a young child learning to do up his or her shoelaces or a teenager learning how to fill out his or her tax form for a part-time job. When adults are busy it is often easier to do things ourselves.

Ask children for help
Doing things together is a great way to build competency and build the confidence that mastery brings. A simple way to initiate joint activity is to ask your child or young person to give you a hand with something. Better still, get them to teach you or show you how to do something you are unfamiliar with. Being a teacher rather than the learner is a great confidence-builder particularly for those kids who struggle with activities that others find easy.

Most importantly, great parents and teachers have a knack of communicating confidence in kids. They find ways to let kids know that they believe in them – that they know their kids will perform and succeed, that they have faith that they can deal with life's challenges and know that they can become more independent.